AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A flexible coupling mechanism comprising a flat, elongate member having a first side and a second side and formed into a C-shaped spring having a top segment, a bottom segment and a curved segment, said curved segment being located between said top and bottom segments and curving at least 180 degrees, said elongate member including a central channel extending longitudinally along said first side between a first end and a second end.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 1, wherein said ~~elongate member is adapted for use between a base portion and a seat portion of a chair~~ top segment includes a means for attachment to a seat portion of a chair and said bottom segment includes a means for attachment to a base portion for providing the chair with a rocking motion.

Claim 3: The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 1, wherein the elongate member is made of an aluminum alloy.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A flexible coupling mechanism comprising an elongate member having first and second ends, said elongate member being formed into a C-shaped member to provide a top segment, a bottom segment and a curved segment, said top and bottom segments being substantially parallel, said C-shaped member having an inner surface and an outer surface, wherein a central channel extends longitudinally along said outer surface to provide a contoured cross-sectional profile.

Claim 5: The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 4, wherein said first and second ends of said elongate member are substantially adjacent each other in a spaced-apart relationship.

Claim 6: The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 4, wherein said channel extends along the entire length of said elongate member from said first end to said second end.

Claim 7: The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 4, wherein said elongate member is made of a non-ferrous material.

Claim 8: The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 4, wherein said inner surface is substantially flat.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 4, wherein said central channel provides ~~contoured cross-sectional profile has~~ a relatively thin center portion and

thicker side portions, said center portion and said side portions extending between said first and second ends along a longitudinal axis of said coupling mechanism.

Claim 10: The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 4, wherein said outer surface is formed for mating with another component for resisting rotational movement between said coupling mechanism and said component.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 10, further comprising at least one hole extending through ~~a first~~ said first end of said elongate member, said hole adapted to receive a fastener for attachment with said component.

Claim 12: The flexible coupling mechanism of Claim 9, wherein said side portions are at least 30% thicker than said center portion.

Claim 13: A coupling mechanism adapted for providing a smooth deflection when subjected to a load comprising an elongate member having a substantially rectangular cross-section and first and second ends, said elongate member having an inner surface and an outer surface, wherein at least two parallel, spaced-apart channels extend longitudinally along said outer surface for providing a contoured cross-sectional profile, said channels creating first and second thin center portions located between thicker side portions, said thin center portions and said thicker side portions extending between said first and said second ends along a longitudinal axis of said coupling mechanism.

Claim 14: The coupling mechanism of Claim 13, wherein said elongate member is made of a non-ferrous material.

Claim 15: The coupling mechanism of Claim 14, wherein said elongate member is made of aluminum.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A coupling mechanism adapted for providing a smooth deflection when subjected to a load, comprising:

at least two elongate members each having a substantially rectangular cross-section and first and second ends, each of said elongate members having an inner surface and an outer surface and each being formed with a channel extending longitudinally along said outer surface to create a thin center portion located between thicker side portions, each of said elongate members having a curved segment which curves at least 180 degrees; and

a horizontal support coupled to said first ends of each of said elongate members.

Claim 17: The coupling mechanism of Claim 16, wherein said horizontal support has a contoured surface adapted for mating with said outer surfaces of said elongate members.

Claim 18: The coupling mechanism of Claim 16, further comprising a post extending downward from said horizontal support, said post adapted to be received by a cylindrical cavity for providing a swivel motion therebetween.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a flexible coupling mechanism, comprising:

providing an elongate member having a substantially rectangular cross-section and formed with a central channel extending longitudinally along a top surface;

bending said elongate member by at least 180 degrees such that said channel is provided along an outer surface; and

forming at least one hole through said elongate member for facilitating attachment of said elongate member to another component.